

EI-830
HERBERT PAUL
BIRTHDATE: JANUARY 28. 1912
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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.
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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: IRV SILBERG

GERMANY, 1928
AGE: 16

SHIP: THE BERLIN
PORT: BREMEN
RESIDENCES:
- GERMANY: BUER, WESTPHALIA
- US: BEDFORD, NH

HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Mr. Paul's wife Helene [EI-831] is present later in the interview.

LEVINE: Today is the 11th-oh, the 11th month, the 30th day, the last day of November 1996. I'm here in Bedford, New Hampshire with Mr. Herbert W. Paul, who came from Germany in 1928, when he was sixteen years of age. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. Okay, well, let's start at the beginning. I know I already asked this, but what is your birth date and where in Germany were you born?

PAUL: I was born in-it's called- it's spelled B-U-E-R. It means bore in Westphalen, Westphalia. Westphalen.

LEVINE: And did you live in the same place up until the time you were sixteen and you left for the United States?

PAUL: Well, I lived in a-a small [tape off/on] outskirts of-yeah. [bad echo on recording] More or less it was a big city. Coalmine area. My father was-

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and your birth date, did you say?

PAUL: 28th of January 1912.

LEVINE: And were you an only child? Did you have brothers and sisters?

PAUL: No. I had one, two brothers. One was four years older and one was four years younger.

LEVINE: Oh, and their names?

PAUL: Their name was Irwin Paul and my youngest brother, I got over here after the second war and his name was Wilhelm. Willie Paul.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, Wilhelm-

PAUL: Wilhelm Paul.

LEVINE: Paul. Wilhelm Paul, uh-huh, and what was your mother's name?

PAUL: I-Ida.

LEVINE: And do you remember her maiden name?

PAUL: Reiner.

LEVINE: And your father's name?

PAUL: Gustave.

LEVINE: And did you have grandparents that lived around you in Westphalia?

PAUL: No, not anymore. They-they had died around 1912, I guess.

LEVINE: On both sides, so you didn't really have grandparents there that you remember?

PAUL: No.

LEVINE: How about aunts and uncles, did you have any other family, relatives?

PAUL: Yeah, quite a few there. My mother's sister and brother and so on. They all lived in a- in Beur there, which was-which had a lot of coalmines.

LEVINE: Did your father worked in the coalmines?

PAUL: My father worked in the coal mine and-unfortunately.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What do you remember him telling you about the coalmines when you were a little boy?

PAUL: Well, those were during the-during the war, of course, things were kind of rough, huh? And he said before I-I remember him saying, "Before I will send -- let you go into those mines, I'll chop your hands off." That was-was-he was what they call working before coal, working down on a- actually the way ---- had the coal out of layers and then-and so you hap-- lay --have to lay on your knees in order to do this and it was really hard, and my father minded it because his legs were not good.

LEVINE: Did he work there all his life?

PAUL: Well, not too long, no. He came from-he was born in Schlesien [Silesia] [unclear] and so was my mother, but when they-of course, everybody tried to get away and things were not so good in the-but they were all doing pretty well in Westphalen in the coal mine area. They were paying pretty good wages.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: And that's why he decided to come over here and they came with the -- their [unclear] which I never met right around 1912.

LEVINE: Oh, I see. So they came here-what-did they actually come to this country soon after you were born?

PAUL: No.

LEVINE: No.

PAUL: They never came out.

LEVINE: Oh, they never came.

PAUL: Well, they did afterwards. My wife's father and mother and my mother came.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

PAUL: But-

LEVINE: But not before you came.

PAUL: No.

LEVINE: No.

PAUL: We had-we brought them over after for a visit.

LEVINE: I see. So your father-what do-do you have any memories of the First World War?

PAUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: What-do you remember any soldiers? Do you remember anything-?

PAUL: Yeah. We have -- I remember was the arma -- army of occupation in 1918, huh, when they-when they came back from the war era. Because the German army was defeated and I remember some of my-one of my aunts coming back in uniform and what-of course I was young then.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. Do you remember anything about the decision to come to this country?

PAUL: Oh, yes, I remember that because, see, my wife's aunt-well, how should I say this now? She-she came over. She come-came here in 1903 from-from Germany and I guess they had-they knew my mother. They sort of took care of my mother was a child, and so they knew that they were-came to Manchester and they would help us during the war. Then when we had the war, they would receiving big packages that were mailed to us from Germany. This was after everything was cleared, you know. They couldn't do it right after the war ended, but once they got stabilized. So I remember they would-were very good, you know. They were real humanitarian. They would have everything in -- in those big packages that they would send over. Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember what was in there?

PAUL: Oh, yeah, of course. Almost everything, but any kind of food, yeah, that wouldn't perish. It wasn't perishable, but, oh, even a lot of oatmeal and stuff and things that we could eat. And there was not too much in the line of meat because it had to be smoked and stuff, but we got small amounts sometimes or meat in a can. And got some warm clothing, stockings and-because we were going to school then, you know.

LEVINE: So this was a woman who had taken care of your mother and she now sort of was here in this country and made sure that-

PAUL: Oh, the woman that took care of my mother, she came in 1903, was here before the war and so they kept in touch with us in Germany. And he-her husband was-well, he wasn't exactly a doctor but he-he-he gave steam baths and massages and stuff and he had a little sideline there. And-and my grandmother or my aunt, she worked in the mill. The Amoskeague Mill then.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: So, he-he had the steam baths, massage and all that here in Manchester?

PAUL: Yeah. On Walker Street in Manchester.

LEVINE: Was that a popular thing at that time?

PAUL: Well, it was popular for him. He came-he would be referred to by a lot of doctors or people that have arthritis problems.

LEVINE: I see.

PAUL: And I remember they were the ones that worked for me. See, when I ask him if they would vouch for me, so he vouched for me and course, I had to live with them. And so I remember while I was living there, people coming in getting those steam baths and there was-they made a box in their special room where person had to go in and undress and probably

have a-well, there was a heater in the-in that box and they would evaporate the steam.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: So they got it like a -they call it a steam bath.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: And that's what he specialized in. After that you had a-they had to lie down for a half an hour. Then they would massage them and it was very well recognized in those days.

LEVINE: Hmm, and it was for arthritis and-

PAUL: For everything, yeah.

LEVINE: And he had it right in the house?

PAUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Hmm.

PAUL: It was in the early-early stages, you know.

LEVINE: Were they mostly German people around where he was living or-

PAUL: Oh, yeah, there was quite a few Germans at that time because they came on account of the textile mill, Amoskeague. There were a loft of them that came from what they called Schlesien Silesia and I remem-- or, well, Saxony. Sachsen. There quite a few of them that came from that area that settled here or got jobs here. The wages were real low, but they worked six days a week. They kep--start six in the morning until six at night and in summer the children would have to go and bring them with a lunch at noon.

LEVINE: Oh.

PAUL: And those, they are the ones that watched for me. In other words, they were responsible for me for three years.

LEVINE: Oh, wow. Uh-huh. And did-did-were the working conditions, I mean by and large, were they better for the people here working in the Amoskeague Mill than they had been in Germany where they had come from?

PAUL: As a whole, yes, but it wasn't an easy life here. Like I said, they worked twelve hours a day and the wages were low and-and they would have to work six days a week, huh.

LEVINE: Wow. And what about you? You had been to school before you left Germany?

PAUL: Yeah. Well, I went to grammar school for seven and a half years. I got-I got-I got out early. That's another story. Because I was quite-

quite tall and sitting in the school benches, I was getting like this, you know.

LEVINE: Hmm.

PAUL: And the doctor would come around and said, "I don't want you to sit like that." So I did. This was--was then under American supervision, the education. This was, you know, when I went to school.

LEVINE: Huh.

PAUL: So they said, "Well, they'll have to give you a special table and chair so you can sit straight." Because that didn't go over so well, but with the rest of them, but they had to do it. But so-but the other solution was to get yourself a job. So that's when I got a number of jobs. I worked as a roofer, tile roof and slate roofer. I did a lot of--I started as an apprentice, but then when I found out I could have the opportunity to come to United States, I--well, gave that up and just worked like a--they call it a hodblunger, a fellow that assists, you know. Like a carrier. Carrier of tile and--

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

PAUL: And also I remember that I did that for a number of years and in order to make extra money, I would carry the tile. They were ten to twelve pounds a piece [unclear]. They call it Ziegel or [unclear] Ziegel and I would have to--I would offer to carry those up for so much a--a hundred after work. So -- I--so I was -- I worked in order to earn enough money so I would have, go buy something decent, you know. So I did that the last year before I ---. So that--that was probably not so good for my health either, for my legs because the weight that I carried was a hundred twenty, a hundred forty pounds, you know, and go up this -- go stairs. With ladders, the steps are [unclear]. But it was hard, but I--I felt I was -- didn't want to look like a bum when I came here, you know, so I had to--

LEVINE: So you spent the money for--for clothing?

PAUL: For clothing, yeah. So I would look--

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: And--

LEVINE: So you gave up the apprenticeship--

PAUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Because you knew you were going to leave.

PAUL: Right. And--

LEVINE: In an apprenticeship, do you get paid while you're learning or you don't?

PAUL: Very little, yeah.

LEVINE: Very little.

PAUL: A day goes by-by different rates the first six months and then the first year and usually it's two and a half to four years that you have apprenticeship.

LEVINE: So you could make more money if you were just plain working.

PAUL: Yes, [unclear].

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh. I see.

PAUL: As a helper.

LEVINE: Uhuh, and how-do you have any ideas on how, you know, because the schools were under the Americans at that time, what-what difference that made in-in the-in the kind of schooling that the Germans had.

PAUL: Well, of course, in those days I didn't know much about politics, and so, but I guess there was a certain con-- supervision from the United States, you know, because we were in that zone. There. We were occupied by United States at -- for a number of years. Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember any experiences that you had in regard to -- that the United States was there occupying the area where you lived?

PAUL: Well, the United States because they would change. Sometimes for six months we would under -- be under Belgium occupation and then some British. We liked the British occupation better. They were more-of course, I didn't know too much as a kid then, but-

LEVINE: Do you have any idea why one was better? What-why the Belgium occupation was worse for-for you?

PAUL: Well, the Belgium, there was I think still a certain hatred after the war, which was being carried over. And course actually we didn't feel that too much because we were all the-we had a lot of children there came from East Germany and from Polish, Poland and so on, and they were all in the same shoes, you know, not earning much money. But, well, a lot of good people. In Germany we had a school system at that time where had a Catholic and a Protestant. If you were baptized, you were either baptized as a Catholic or c-- so because my folks were Catholic, had a Catholic background.

But they do not were -- my --they were not very religious, but my -- they believed in God, you know. They were -- I'd see my father get down on the knees when things got -- pray. But that's-it was different in the schooling, see. Yeah, you had to [unclear] Protestant school or evangelischer education or schule or the Catholic school. And so the Catholic school had, they would furnish-then the priests [unclear] their

-- their educators. They would come in the school twice a week, two hours a session and to learn about religion.

LEVINE: You went to the Catholic school?

PAUL: Yeah. Yeah. In fact, I was-not holy, but I was kind of sincere. It was my-since I was sort of serious, I just-not too geared up about everything, you know. Just was -- life was not easy. So I-even as a kid, I would look for odd jobs. My father was quite handy. He -- he was like-like I said he was born in Silesia there but he was-he started the organization-the what do you call it now? Well, organization from-from-from Silesia. They call it a Verein, huh? And so he had started the certain Vereine -- we had been Buer Hasle --Schlesien Arbeiter Verein. [Silesian Workers Organization] And he was really active in that. He was-became president. He was organizer for the entire area --was-

LEVINE: And this was a gathering of people who had come from the same area you came from?

PAUL: Yeah. Hmm.

LEVINE: Now, what did they do when they got together?

PAUL: Well, mostly during the-they would have a few picnics and get together, huh? And during the winter months, of course, they had their dances. They have their also own musicians, like my bro--brothers used to play.

LEVINE: Oh.

PAUL: And-

LEVINE: What did they play?

PAUL: My brother-the both of them played the accordion.

LEVINE: Oh.

PAUL: But one of them played the bandoneon, it was like an accordion, you know.

LEVINE: How do you spell bandoneon?

PAUL: Ban-B-A-N-D-O-U-M. Bandoumium [sic]. And they were really very good at it, you know. They even -- they liked nice music and knew a little bit about-well, not opera, but good-good music.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Were you musical at all?

PAUL: Yes and no. I couldn't afford. After I took class-viotin--violin lessons and-but we couldn't afford to-my folks couldn't afford to pay for it. So I finally got discouraged and I gave it up. But I had bought a violin and I-I would play with my brothers and then they would meet on a Sunday morning and have a little practice. And so I kind of enjoyed

that. So the first thing when I came to the United States, as soon as I could, I bought a violin and I had it up to a few years ago. Never played much, but have German fellows here that gave me lessons, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Now, what did people do-in other words, were there any kinds of ceremonies or any kinds of get together celebrations that you remember in Germany?

PAUL: Well, not-not too many, but I remember of course the holidays. Christmas was one they were really-they tried to visit each other, huh? And-but my folks were, my mother loved to sing and so they had a-called Gesang Verein, organization of singers. And so they would have their practice and they would give concerts and like especially around Christmas time. Many times they would -- before Christmas Eve they would go from house to house and sing.

LEVINE: Oh.

PAUL: Somebody that was unable to go anywheres. I remember even going with them.

LEVINE: Oh, really. Do you remember those songs? Those German songs?

PAUL: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Wow. Wow. Would you want to sing any on the tape?

PAUL: No, no.

LEVINE: Do you remember them? Are you-?

PAUL: I would have to really do a little more-

LEVINE: Okay. All right, let's see.

PAUL: They had -- they have had Christmas songs like they were understand. They would sing:

Am Weihnachtsbaum die Lichter
brennen,
Wie glänzt er festlich, lieb
und mild,
Als spräch' er: Wollt in mir erkennen
Getreuer Hoffnung stilles Bild.

.Zwei Engel sind hereingetreten,
Kein Auge hat sie kommen sehn,
Sie gehn zum Weihnachtsbaum [sic]
und beten
Und wenden wieder sich und gehn.

.
[On the Christmas tree the lights
are burning;

How it glows so festively, dear
and softly
As if to say, "Find in me
Of true hope a still image."

Two angels entered the room
No eye saw them come in.
They go to the Christmas tree
and pray
And then turn and leave.]

That's a good song.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. How nice.

PAUL: But there were a lot-still enough [unclear] singing [unclear].

LEVINE: So what was that one that you just sang?

PAUL: Oh, this was just a regular Christmas song. It was the angel came,
came Christmas Eve.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

PAUL: Came to the table and prayed with them.

LEVINE: I see. I think your wife is coming.

PAUL: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

PAUL: Ah, she can probably tell you more about it.

LEVINE: Well, so, what were your favorite toys? Do you remember any
toys that you had as a child?

PAUL: Well, very, very few toys. I was-when I got a little older I was
quite interested in pigeons. They call them Briefftauben [Letter-doves]
and they brought one that -- and they would send those away on weekends,
you know. In the beginning that they would fly shorter distance,
probably twenty, thirty miles, but then they would-every week they would
go further. Of course, some of those pigeons, they were being attacked
too, by-just like here, you know. But that was a big sport in that part
of the country was. Everybody was interested in raising pigeons and
being in competition with the next fellow.

LEVINE: Oh, so somebody would have like a champion pigeon?

PAUL: Well, they have organizations, Briefftauben Verein and that was a
very popular thing in-in Germany.

LEVINE: Is the-is that what that means? The name of the
organization, how does that translate?

PAUL: Brieftauben. Brieftauben is --brief is -- you know what a brief is? A carrier, letter carrier.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Uh-huh.

PAUL: Flyin'. And they would-they --when you sent those in it's like -- like participating in a -- in that -- in a race.

LEVINE: Yeah.

PAUL: You know. You have to bring them in sometimes like Thursday afternoon or Friday and you bring them to a certain restaurant or so that was equipped to handle that. And they would put these rubbers -- bands, you know, [not understood]. So when they came, they had to have so many minutes to get that bars washed away. That's for that --

LEVINE: Oh, that's interesting.

PAUL: Yeah. Well, they would -- they had that -- the roofs --- that the little-that they would land when they came back, you know.

LEVINE: Oh.

PAUL: Many times when they-they were-the birds were so exhausted --yes [unclear].

LEVINE: Hello. [unclear] [tape off/on] Okay, we're going to continue here. You were talking about that there were places on the roof where the pigeons were designated to land.

PAUL: Yeah, see for the roof and there they would have like that, go in there like in that. Had it divided into little stalls and that's where the pigeon would come in. But many times the pigeon went on a long flight, it was so exhausted, it was just trying to get on the --on the end of it. It's -- it's like the housing, you know, they were--. And that was-it was quite a -- a big thing there. Everybody sitting in a garden there, looking at the sky to see when they're coming. And--yeah, because my young brother there, he-he was very much interested in that, too.

LEVINE: Oh. Ah, let's see. Are there any other things that you think about when you think of your first sixteen years being in Germany? The kinds of things you remember particularly?

PAUL: Oh, well, I'll tell you, when I was sixteen years old, I was just-I knew then that I had a chance to come to the United-

[END OF SIDE A]

[BEGIN SIDE B]

PAUL: --didn't get any. There was no letter writing or so, communication with Germany during the war, you know. And-

LEVINE: How about after the war?

PAUL: Well, as soon as the war was over, they man--they managed to get a couple letters in and so for instance, we get a letter from an American soldier who was stationed in Germany after the war. Of course, we didn't know what-what had happened to--they didn't know what happened to us and we didn't know, you know. So this soldiers, German fellow, he-he made it a point to talk with us and let us know or let my parents know [unclear] that I was still okay, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

PAUL: So course it almost happened--well, I don't know whether I'm getting off the track here, but-

[pause]

LEVINE: Let's see. We were talking about the-the soldier who-had you-he knew your family?

PAUL: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Had he known the family?

PAUL: No. This--well, maybe wa-- wa -- it's -- it was quite interesting. There went -- it was somebody had met this soldier and--and he said it's -- my mother had gone there to the quar-- headquarters of where the soldiers were stationed there and she asked there was anybody here that she could leave a message. And this fellow agreed to write to us or tell us that they were--they were supposed to tell us that they were okay. And -- and then on the other hand, we told them that--that we were okay and they would forward that message to her.

LEVINE: I see. Now, was this the woman that had been sending over the-the parcels?

PAUL: No, not that was my-my aunt, you know. The one that vouched for me, her folks there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So the German soldier was telling who that you were okay?

PAUL: Yeah, there was--there was--most, most of them were interested whether you were still alive or whether--a lot of them got killed, you know. They were--

LEVINE: Yeah.

PAUL: And it's--that was quite nice. That have -- that helped. At that time we knew a little more about us, with letters and stuff. But anyway, that's the object was that we--there were some people interested in what was going on there.

LEVINE: Yeah, and then when you left, did you--did you travel alone or who did you travel with?

PAUL: No, we traveled alone. I mean we-the agent would sell us this ticket for --. This wasn't that going as -- in -- in steerage like they used to. We were going third class or-or. So the folks that had me come, they paid for it or advanced me the money and I paid them back when I-

LEVINE: Did you have to wait a while for the quota or anything like that?

PAUL: Well, yes, you had to wait quite some time. But -- but having-having some kind of a-a-advantage by having folks here, you know, and that worked for me. So it wasn't-was easier.

LEVINE: So when you said-do you remember leaving home? Do you remember saying goodbye and going to the port?

PAUL: Well, at that time I-we didn't have too far to go to the-to the train station and had to go-from there we had to go to Bremen and that's where the ship, ships were, huh? And that's where we had to stay three days before. And had to go through this whole examination, too. And-

LEVINE: Was it a very thorough examination that you had?

PAUL: No.

LEVINE: No.

PAUL: But they wanted to know-actually, of a -- of a kind of people they asked this was not-they were not that easy letting everybody in like they do today, you know. But- but --

LEVINE: When you-did you have in mind that you were going to go back or did you have in mind that you-when you came here, you were going to be staying?

PAUL: Not really, but-but the -- the only thing I had in mind going back is just to be-go home once more and see one-

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

PAUL: And-and that's what happened after. That's how I met my wife going home. That's another story.

LEVINE: Oh, yeah, you'll get to that one. Well-you-so in other words, you went-you took the Bremen, that was the name of the ship?

PAUL: Did I come with the-

HELENEE: Berlin.

PAUL: Berlin, yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, the Berlin.

PAUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: And do you remember anything about the Berlin? About the passage?

PAUL: Oh, not much. It was just kind of shice-- but it was nice. The food was good and I-and the people were all very nice because a lot of 'em-

LEVINE: Do you remember what happened on the voyage? I mean what-what did you do, for example, for most of the time?

PAUL: Well, not much. Of course, I was only, like I said, sixteen years old, you know, so what connection [not understood]. So we managed. It was nice. We got seasick at first, the first couple of days was the-

LEVINE: And you were in a cabin?

PAUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: How many were in there?

PAUL: Two. Just another fellow and myself, yeah.

LEVINE: And do you remember when the ship came into New York Harbor?

PAUL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: What was that like for you, your first impression?

PAUL: Well, the-the ship landed like the night before and you had to stay outside the harbor there, and then-

LEVINE: On the ship.

PAUL: On the ship, yeah, and then he-the fellows who in charge of the immigrants or they had the examiners and they came on ship then in the morning and they checked out the papers and stuff. And then they had made arrangements to take us-if they knew exactly where we were going to go. Once we were in New York, we had to still travel four, five hundred miles, you know, inland. Well, at --in that-that time they knew-we knew I wanted to go to Manchester, New Hampshire. So.

LEVINE: So-so they directed you to the train, or how did that work?

PAUL: No, they brought you to the-to the train station, the depot. Like in New York there's that big-what is called anyway, Helene?

LEVINE: Grand Central.

HELENEA: Grand Central.

PAUL: Grand Central, yeah. And they would send you there like a package, you know. You had a sign there that you were just visitin'-

LEVINE: They put a tag on you, uh-huh.

PAUL: Yeah, and-

LEVINE: And it said-and it said "Manchester, New Hampshire"?

PAUL: No.

LEVINE: No.

PAUL: Not. No, it didn't'. It just gave your name, your number or whatever. And then they told you-they told us like we had-we had to go to Boston in that area. So they-they knew then that we had to go. And-

LEVINE: Were you traveling alone to Manchester?

PAUL: Yeah. I was-they put us on a train in New York at midnight and so it was figured out so that we would be in Boston around seven o'clock in the morning. But on that midnight train, there were also a lot of salesmen on there, and everybody knew there was an immigrant so that everyone-- one was trying to get as much information about Germany at once. So we had quite an interesting evening, you know, late during the night. A lot of them, they wanted to-you know, they had German extraction and I was-I was lonesome anyways, so I got to Boston and my brother had come here a few days-years before to-to Manchester, and he had come to Boston to pick me up from this. So he was welcome me and took me from there to Manchester.

LEVINE: Huh.

PAUL: So that was-

LEVINE: And then did your sponsors meet you?

PAUL: Well, no, where-the sponsor, I lived with 'em.

LEVINE: Oh.

PAUL: This were my-my- they call them my aunt and my uncle and there was made out. They had a bedroom there and I went there, and stayed with them and ate with them and they took care of me.

LEVINE: What were your first few days like, do you remember?

PAUL: Well, the first few days were nice because my brother I hadn't see for a couple of years and he had some friends. But then I tried to get work and that was the hardest part because I was young. And-but I had worked quite a bit in Germany. So I got odd- all different odd jobs I had. I suppose I knew then that the company that was near to the railroad track and they would bring coal in and they would dump the coal off on top and then it would slide down, and they had to have places

where they have the-where they could-where this land-where this coal would accumulate. But they also had to be a good ground so you could shovel it off.

So I took a job and I was helping mix cement. See, I knew quite a bit about mortar and all. So I had a job there for three, four days and while I was there, there were some elderly fellows who had a farm here and they asked me if I wouldn't help them or come and do some work for us. Picked up a little money here and there, and in the meantime, every morning I went to the tannery. That's where they make leather, huh? And that was the only company or there that was still doing well and earning pretty good money.

So I went there for almost six months every morning and finally this big Irishman, Mike O'Connor, he waved to me. Says, "You come with me," and he brought me to a place and there was a lot of pieces of leather. And he explained that I had to trim this, but he-he says, "I'll get you somebody who can speak the language," and so there were a couple German girls there who came from Manchester here and they brought me. They came and they showed me how to do it and that was a good break for me that because the earnings were pretty good. I would make as much as eighteen dollars there, which was a lot of money then, you see.

LEVINE: So that was the first job you had for any length of time?

PAUL: Oh, yeah, but before that was hard, you know, for a couple of years [unclear]. But that-that helped. That job helped a lot and then the place I lived, my uncle's house there, they were-had done some painting there-well, that's another story, I think.

LEVINE: No, go ahead. No, that's interesting.

HELENEE: Some of this comes after the war, too.

PAUL: This is after the war, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

PAUL: That's when-

LEVINE: This is-but how long did you stay living with-with your aunt and uncle?

PAUL: Oh, until we had a little out, but well, I stayed with them a year, a year and a half or so. And my aunt was very good -- my mother's aunt actually. She was a very good friend. So.

LEVINE: Did you-did you miss certain things about Germany when you first came? Were there certain things that you would have liked to have held onto?

PAUL: Well, not too much. A played a little-I played soccer, you know. So I was barely here with a-there were -- was a German group here that had-they were playing with the Scotsmen. They formed a group, Scot--

Scotch and the Germans. So the first thing they did, they came after me. On a Sunday morning, I was still in bed. "Oh, we got a game going on. You have to play with us," you know. So that's how. I hadn't any soccer shoes, you know, but that's how I got in with some of the group.

LEVINE: Were the Scots and the Germans particularly friendly?

PAUL: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah? More so than some of the other groups?

PAUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

PAUL: Some of my good friends, you know, are Scottish. Even today.

LEVINE: Were there many Scots in this area?

PAUL: Oh, quite a few.

LEVINE: Huh.

PAUL: Fact-well, a lot of them came over here, too. Got in the service and then they got-got a job with General Motors or something. So.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. So when did you meet your wife? You came when you were sixteen.

PAUL: When I met my wife I was nineteen. After I was-I get this job here where I was telling you that-in the tannery and-

LEVINE: Do you know what this job was called? What-what kind of a task you were doing with the leather?

PAUL: I really don't remember, you know.

HELENE: Well, you-it was-it wasn't trimming.

PAUL: Was-

HELENE: Similar to it. They had to-

PAUL: Well, it was.

HELENE: Had to-you had to trim the hair off, didn't you?

PAUL: No, not the hair. That was all clean.

HELENE: Oh, okay.

PAUL: That just-they waste leather. They have -- now when you have a hide, you take the top off, huh? That gives you the top leather but then there's what they call the split.

HELENE: [unclear]

PAUL: And this was splits that they would send whatever was left and you had-pick out-pick out the best part of that split and trim it and they put it-put it in a-and then they would come around and count them and so if you-how many hundred you did then you would pay-get paid accordingly. So which was a very good job actually and until I said, "Well"-I had to-well, just to come to that, but they were painting my uncle's house. And the-the fellow, the painter was a German fellow, came from Berlin. He had come in after the war, too, and I came.

I got kind of sick of working at the tannery and I said, "Geez, if I can-I can't do all my life long." So I went to this fellow one night and asked him if I couldn't learn the business, the painting business from him. And he was going forward and back, you know. He was real well known -- good [unclear]. "Well," he says, "there's one problem." He says, "You're self-supporting and I don't know if I can pay you enough as an apprentice." But I said, "Well, how much can you pay me?" "Oh, he says, "probably ten dollars a week or so." "Oh, that's fine," I said. "I only need eight dollars. I have to pay eight dollars for room and board." But then he gave me the first week twelve or fifteen, anyway. He hired me then and I was supposed to be an apprenticed. And so after I have that job and I have more money, and that's when I decided it was time to go visit. And that's why I went home that Christmas to visit my folks -- was slow in painting anyway. And I got-got on the ship in Boston and when I got on, that's-HELENE was there.

LEVINE: You were going back to Germany, too?

HELENE: Uh-hmm.

PAUL: She had come here. She was not quite sixteen, but they had to be sixteen.

HELENE: [unclear] when I came.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: So we went back home together.

LEVINE: From the same area?

PAUL: No, she comes from Bremen -- that's North Sea, and I was, oh, hundred fifty miles further south -- coalmine. And so that's how we were get acquainted and went together for some dances and stuff.

LEVINE: When you came back here, do you remember any kind of music that was popular, particularly with immigrants in this country?

PAUL: Not actually.

LEVINE: Of that time.

PAUL: I don't really remember. I mean, I think music was more or -- more or less international. They had some good hits here that-

LEVINE: Do you remember the Victrola, when it first was introduced? Was that something that you-?

PAUL: No, that was before my time.

LEVINE: Oh, but you-but you didn't use records, did you? Or-

PAUL: Oh, we had records here, but we had a-we had a machine and so on. Then came this radio, huh? That was one other, but that was right after we got married.

HELENE: [unclear]

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Okay, when you look back on your life coming here as a young man and spending your life here, how do you think about that now? How do you think about, you know, your country of origin and this country?

PAUL: Well, I think I was really fortunate. Sort of successful, too. Able to go to Germany and then met my wife and we started our own home, huh.

LEVINE: Now, did you continue as a painter then?

PAUL: Yeah. I continued as a painter and-

LEVINE: Oops. Okay.

PAUL: And I said, "Well"-oh, I'd been. That's it. While I was working for this other fellow, a young German fellow started in and I became his foreman, see. Twelve dollar. And so it ended up that I was doing all the work while he was in a-in a tavern getting crocked, and I said, "Gee," I says, "If I have to go do all this work, anyway, so why don't I?" There were a number of things I couldn't-didn't know enough about -- -- stenciling, imitation of certain woods, you know. So I said, "I have to go to decorating school." And at that time Helen's brother-in-law, he-he had quite a job in Boston -- in New York and he said, "Well," he said, "why don't I look around and find out where you can go to school." So that's how didn't take long and he would say, "Well, you can go to school three times or four times a week and it won't cost you much as being [unclear] to label your name in." And so I would go to work during the night in a factory and then go to school and come home. I guess it was after we were married already, my wife went back to New York with me. She was staying with some of our distant relatives in-

LEVINE: So she-

PAUL: Well, I was-I was in New York for-for almost four months until I felt I had enough. In the meantime, I had gotten-we had gotten really well known in Manchester by playin' theater and shows, you know. So everybody knew I was going to go in business. So when I came back, I had

more orders to-so, and this is a fact. I had the first six months; I had sixty men working for me. And everybody came and gave me a job and all because I worked pretty reasonable, too, and I-

LEVINE: Were you doing stenciling? You were doing decorative, too, by then?

PAUL: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

PAUL: But the biggest part was wood imitation. They had to make -- somebody just had a plain entrance and they wanted it to look more like oak or-or walnut you know. I learned all those.

LEVINE: So have you enjoyed doing that? Did you enjoy doing that?

PAUL: I do it -- did it for a little time. I didn't have enough time anymore. I was so busy. We had a-we had a big business and I was only there-how long were we there, a year and a half and then we bought a different home already. Moved, and then I had a half a dozen men working, but I had-I was fortunate, though, that I was able to get some really very good help. Had a young German descendent fellow who was graduated from high school and I used to-he used to come and deliver newspapers to us. And he always had his wagon, this little wagon that he had the papers in, the Decorator for Mickey Mouse and all those things. So he came and he said, "Mr. Paul," he says, "I would like to go to work for you. [unclear]," you know. So I said, "Sure." Well, anyway, make a long story short, he-he become a most valuable man. He-he ran-he took care of the business and he did all the work. Nice, nice stencil work and everything and whatever I could find out and so on, he-he was just a natural. So. It was a good break, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Yeah. Do-how do you think of yourself now? Do you think of yourself as mainly American or mainly German or how do you-?

PAUL: Well, I think I'm mostly American. After all, we got great grandchildren here living here. Whew.

LEVINE: Yeah. Yeah. Well, is there anything else you can think of about coming here and living here and what you've done in your life that you feel proud of and-

PAUL: Well, it was not easy and it-but also I was kind of finding a good partner. So we only been married sixty-four years. So I think that's made life easier, yeah. So and we had downs, well, we had them together.

LEVINE: Yeah.

PAUL: But we also had some good times. Once I was started in business, we never had any need of money. You know, I always earned enough money.

HELENE: [unclear] we had it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, yeah. Okay, well, I want to thank you so much for a very interesting interview.

PAUL: Oh, you're welcome. I don't know. Maybe I-a lot of things I could tell you, but it's hard to-for me to express myself, as I-

LEVINE: Maybe there's something else that would be, you know, a good addition to the tape.

PAUL: Well, there's little things that happened in between there, but those-

LEVINE: Like what?

PAUL: Well, I can't think of them right now, but I mean there's a lot of- all the-we used to put on a good many shows here. Of course, I joined- I've become a Mason, you know, so I was -- went there forty, oh, forty-seven years ago.

LEVINE: Oh.

PAUL: So I went. I'm a Quarnian [ph].

HELENE: Forty-five.

PAUL: Forty-five years.

LEVINE: Wow.

PAUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: What kind of shows did you put on?

PAUL: What kind of shows?

LEVINE: Yeah.

PAUL: Oh, at first, when I was talking about shows, it was in the German society. See, I was president of certain clubs and there were-well, we put on shows in German, you know.

LEVINE: Oh.

PAUL: We had the Turner, Turn Hall. The Turner Hall and a lot of Germans here, and-yeah.

LEVINE: So would they be like musical shows?

PAUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: So did-were there-were there a lot of different ethnic groups doing the same kind of thing? I mean having their own shows and their own clubs and-

PAUL: Well, not a lot of them, but a few of them. I guess the Polish people did, too.

HELENE: Belgium.

PAUL: And the Belgium.

LEVINE: Here in Manchester?

PAUL: Yeah. The Belgium not too much, but -

HELENE: They had their own hall.

PAUL: They were-yeah, their own hall, but there was-they were cigar makers. You know, 724s, that was here in Manchester.

LEVINE: The-

PAUL: They made good money.

LEVINE: That was the Belgians.

PAUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: And how about the Germans? What kinds of things did they mainly do here for work?

PAUL: Well, the ones that we knew quite a few of was in the-

HELENE: Sausage.

PAUL: Restaurant business, huh. Shopping and building. [unclear]

HELENE: [unclear]

PAUL: Yeah, Skal [ph]. Skal is sausage manufacturer.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

PAUL: And we had Weigler.

LEVINE: Wyler?

PAUL: Weigler.

LEVINE: Weigler, what's that?

PAUL: His name.

HELENE: Same thing, sausage. Meat.

PAUL: They were butchers, huh. And the German people would go there Saturday morning or Friday afternoon, do the shopping.

HELENE: [unclear]

PAUL: And then we had a friend of ours that started [unclear] fixtures and they had a big business that. He came from Sachsen, Germany. But he started and came here as a young man, too. But he had quite a few hundred people at Hampshire Showcase. Probably [unclear]. Most people knew him.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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